

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman André Carson joined a majority of his congressional colleagues in supporting legislation that will upgrade our nation's passenger rail services and seek to ensure that Amtrak workers at the Beech Grove repair facility do not arbitrarily have their jobs relocated. H.R. 6003, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act was approved in the House by a vote of 311 to 104.

“High gas prices and soaring flight costs have only heightened the need for America to adopt a more comprehensive and inclusive transportation policy that propels us forward,” said Congressman André Carson. “This legislation makes the right investments in our nation's rail transport system and allows Amtrak to become a more feasible and accessible medium of transportation for our nation's travelers.”

In order to ease the gridlock on our nation's overcrowded highways and congested airports, the Passenger Rail Investment Act authorizes \$4.2 billion to Amtrak for capital grants and \$3.0 billion for operating grants. Past inconsistent federal support has hampered Amtrak's ability to replace catenaries, passenger cars, bridges, ties, and other equipment necessary for Amtrak to provide adequate services for its customers.

This legislation also includes language that Congressman Carson asked the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation Committee to insert that seeks to assist workers at Amtrak's repair facility in Beech Grove, Indiana. In order to combat arbitrary job relocations and ensure that the Beech Grove plant is being utilized to its fullest potential, H.R. 6003 mandates that Amtrak issue a report to Congress on the extent to which it is maximizing its opportunities for all of its repair and maintenance facilities.

In the past there have been repeated attempts to close the Beech Grove facility and outsource the work performed at this facility. Beech Grove has the necessary equipment and labor force that should enable Amtrak to do more in-sourcing and further expand its maintenance services.

“With high energy costs immobilizing many of our nation's summer travelers, it is essential that we have a viable intra- and inter-state rail network capable of transporting commuters, workers, and tourists to their final destinations,” added Congressman Carson. “In order to accomplish this, it is vital that we ensure that Amtrak is properly utilizing all of its tools and resources in ensuring that our passenger rail system is an efficient, productive and reliable mode of transportation.”

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